

72/73 CLASS NEWS

As many of you know, we lost **Bob Brandon** on 14 August 2018 in New Orleans when, as was reported in the *Pensacola News Journal*, his heart simply stopped. Bob attended high school in Hawaii and graced us with his presence at USNA as a member of the 24th Company. "Brandoni", as he was known to his classmates, was commissioned into the Marine Corps and, following flight training in Pensacola, served as a Marine Aviator. By his own admission, the pinnacle of his career was being a member of the Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron, serving as aircraft commander of the HC-130 Hercules "Fat Albert." (His flight suit, gear, and memorabilia are on permanent display in the McGuire's Blue Angel room in Pensacola.) After leaving the Marines, Bob continued his flying career with Delta Air Lines until his retirement in January 2005 flying the B-727, Lockheed L-1011, and the B-737-800. It was while flying for Delta that he met and married his wife, Laurie. After retiring from Delta, Bob continued flying with Lifeguard Air Ambulance until September 2017 on medical missions throughout the hemisphere. He once flew a small aircraft to the mouth of the Amazon River to evacuate an injured patient and return her for medical care in the US. In June of this year, Bob returned to the skies and began flying for Airmed International until his death. He often remarked, "I can't believe I get paid to do this." Bob never met a stranger, never failed to help a friend, and never missed an opportunity to socialize, and will be missed by all who were blessed to know and fly with him. A memorial service was held at the Naval Aviation Memorial Chapel at NAS Pensacola on 24 August; the accompanying photo of the "Graffiti Bridge" pays honor to Bob. The Class extends its deepest sympathy to Laurie, their four sons, two grandchildren, four brothers, two sisters and his stepmother.



Graffiti Bridge in Pensacola, FL

We also learned that we lost two more classmates back in 2014.

Bill Dreeland passed away suddenly on 14 April 2014. Bill was born in New York but lived most of his life in Arizona, and was with us for a while at USNA as a member of 24th Company. He had a long career in law enforcement, with the majority in US Customs. He retired in 2007 as a Senior Special Agent for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Bill was a devoted marksman and long-term firearms instructor, teaching at Gunsite Academy for many years. He was also an Army Reserve officer. He enjoyed camping in the desert, classic movies, bird watching, history, cooking with his family, and good books, with a particular fondness for Sherlock Holmes. The Class extends its condolences to Bill's wife and two daughters.

We also learned that from his sister, Elaine, that **Andy Mentecki** passed away on 27 August 2014. Andy graduated with us as a member of 15th Company, and had a distinguished career, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U. S. Air Force. We have little additional information at present, but know that he was laid to rest at Quantico National Cemetery; details can be found at: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/135494618/joseph-andrew-mentecki>. The Class extends its deepest sympathy to Elaine and members of their family.

A personal note: Those of us on your Class Board of Directors try very hard to remain aware of life events, so that such information can be disseminated within the Class in a timely manner. On a number of occasions, when we have been alerted to the passing of a

classmate, we have been able to pass that information quickly to their company-mates and send information out via The Gouge, and members of the Class have stepped forward to be present with, and/or help spouses and their families in their time of need. That presence is powerful as well as comforting, no matter how insignificant it may seem to many of us. So, please make a point of passing this information along to your spouses and next of kin. If you learn of the passing of a classmate, please notify your Scribe (Rich Robison—Scribe72@comcast.net) and/or our VP for Class Affairs (Bill Moffatt—wgmoffatt@comcast.net) as soon as possible.

That's about it, folks. Be safe, and keep those who are away from home and put their lives on the line for us in your thoughts and prayers this Holiday season. More to come...next year. D. O.

Tried and True With '72.

'73

Life Membership: 65%

Donor Participation: 16.08%

Pres: **Kevin Callahan**

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Hello classmates, Happy Holidays! I hope everyone is well and gotten your gift for that very special ex-roomie! The mail buoy was riding high in the water but it received a major unrep so I have a lot of good stuff to pass on. I think this edition has a record number of pictures!

The first is a message from our incoming class president Dirk Mosis;

✉ Jim, It is a pleasure to drop a line. I enjoy knowing some things like Shipmate take a bit longer to reach us than the immediate Facebook, email, text, requiring an immediate response. This ability to reflect, to savor, to not first react, could not have been felt more strongly than I did at our 45th. First - thanks to the committee - Peter Flynn, Doug Rice, Mike Seaman, Chuckles, Kevin C, Bruce H, et al (I know - I am

omitting some very worthy people) - for an outstanding time, venue, food. Bill Short - giving selflessly on the Prayer Team and the Agent Orange project. Tim Ellis and Randy Reinhardt at the Memorial Service. Bob Wakefield, Tom Gallagher, Ken Mayeaux and Mike Curreri for all their help. Rick and Karen Elliott on sound systems. Kevin leading all. We have a great group of class officers, at large, task force leaders, to continue on course, selflessly, for our 50th. George Watt leading up our gift initiative and Joe Stewart our link in the chain efforts are as good as '73 can provide! Virginia and I had the best time seeing everyone. If you have advice I cherish hearing from any and all. (dmo-sis3@aol.com). Finally and very important I want to thank Kevin for all his years of service to the class. I look forward to morphing from informal backup to stepping into Kevin's shoes in a more formal leadership role. Non sibi, Semper fi, Dirk '73

I have some great pictures from the 45th. I will start with the 9th Company dinner at Rick and Karen Elliott's house.



9th Company 45th Party. L to R Randy Blough, Leif Hendrickson, Rick Elliott, Bill Serues, Steve Ritacco, Bryant Orr, and Bill Comly

I received the following from Mark Kohring;

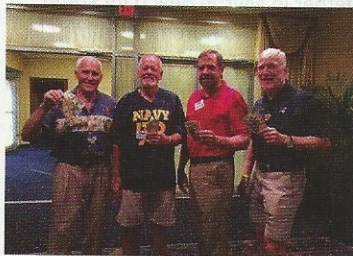
✉ Jim, Fifteen members of the Eighth Company (along with seven wives and girlfriends) gathered at the home of Bruce Hargus on the Saturday of our 45th Reunion weekend. We talked a good deal about Rodney Shockley [the first of our company to pass away (see June *Shipmate* for obituary)] and memories we had of him during our four years in Crabtown. Scott Haney told the story of how he and Rodney had



'73: 9th Company and wives. Randy and Debbie Blough, Rick and Karen Elliott, Leif and Karen Hendrickson, Bill and Jane Serues, Steve and Bev Ritacco, Bryant and Marquita Orr, Bill and Lynne Comly

agreed to stay with their respective roommates and convince LT "Iron Mike" Singleton that it would be best for the company to have the spring set Company Commander (Haney) on one end of 8-3 and the Sub-Commander (Shockley) on the other end. Since the uniform shop did not alter Scott's plebe issue FDBs to allow him to march in p-rades (Scott admitted he never asked them to) and since he was exempt from marching due to outdoor track season, Rod led the 8-Balls on Worden Field. Haney did some research and discovered that the 8th Company color standing rose from 17th at the end of winter set to 7th after the spring set; he was pretty sure it was not due to academics. This vast improvement was in a large part due to Rod Shockley's leadership during the graded p-rades that spring. It was proposed and accepted that an Eighth Company tradition would begin to make a gift to the Class of 1973 in memory of our company-mates who have passed on before us. Since Rod is the first, this is the opportune time to begin this legacy.

The company was proud to have been represented on the USNA golf course in this year's Class of '73 scramble event. They were even prouder of their team for collecting the first place money at four under par to best the other ten teams. How many color points do we get for this achievement?



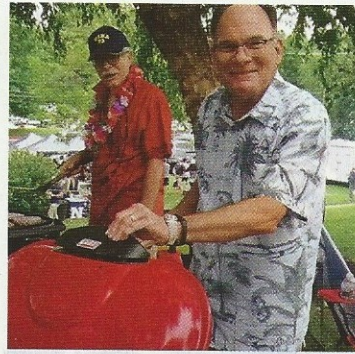
8th Company Golf Team with their winnings! Scott Haney, Mark Kohring, Tom Gallagher, and Mike Trent

Mark, Thanks for the great input. Second Battalion is well represented in this edition.

I have some pictures from our first tailgate of the year hosted by 73's Staff Corp. Mike Kalas led the Staff Corps effort, helped by Ron Borro, Mike Righi, Rick Elliott, Tom Storch, Marty Deafenbaugh, Tim McClay and Mike Flynn.



The Staff Corp's Navy-Memphis tailgate party



Flipping burgers for the tailgate party are Rick Elliott (CEC) and Mike Kalas (SC)

I several pieces of sad news to pass on; William "Fred" Seebode, passed away at his home in Silver Spring on June 17, 2018. Fred went Surface Line out of the Academy. A tribute for Fred was held by 16th Company on 29 August 2018. Attending were; Bookie Boland, Matt Saviello, Jack Rush, Jim Murphy, Ted Turnblacer, Tom Storch, Marc Costa, Jim Hamlin, Mike Ellison, Bob Klaus,

Dennis Grabulis, Scott Krajnik. Look for more on Fred's life in an upcoming Last Call.

I just received the news that Elizabeth "Liz" Gerken, wife of Bill Gerken passed away on October 23, 2017 in Del Cerro, CA.

Dr. Tim Hale of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, passed away on August 30, 2018. Tim left the Academy before graduation. Look for more on Tim's life in an upcoming Last Call.

Please keep the families of all our departed Classmates in your thoughts and prayers.

I am about at my limit so I will stop now. Keep replenishing the mail buoy. Susie and I hope you have a Great Holidays. Please remember all our service men and women who are deployed and away from their families. Thanks and as always, Go Navy and Semper Fi! General



'73: 8th Company at the 45th! Front row left to right: Mike Trent, Ross Chaffin (31st Co), Hank Thompson, Sam Hester, and Jerry Purciarello. Second row: Ron Scudder, Dan Musmanno, Jim Canter, Barry Trudeau, Bruce Hargus, Scott Haney. Back Row: Tom Collins, Mark Kohring, Kevin Foskett, Jeff Laughlin, Tom Gallagher



'73: 16th Co Tribute to Fred Seebode